

# ITINERARY - SPLENDOUR OF IMPERIAL CAPITALS

- **Day 1: Arrive Budapest**

Upon arrival to Budapest Airport our local representative will greet you and then transfer to the hotel. Check-in and rest of the day free to explore the capital of Hungary, which was formed at the end of the nineteenth century (1873) when the three cities Pest, Buda and Óbuda merged together, although its history goes back one thousand years. At the Castle Hill and the Castle District there are three churches, six museums, and a host of interesting buildings, streets and squares. The former Royal Palace is one of the symbols of Hungary. The first royal residence on the Castle Hill was built in the 13th century, extended in the 14th century becoming the largest Gothic palace of the late Middle Ages.

Overnight at the hotel in Budapest.

- **Day 2: Budapest**

Buffet Breakfast. Today you will have the opportunity to experience the city on your own pace with the Hop on-Hop off sightseeing tour. Budapest, whose name is the composition of the city names of "Buda" and "Pest", may be known for its thermal baths but there are also plenty of other attractions such as the vast Buda Castle, the majestic Chain Bridge and the Fisherman's Bastion. The neo-Gothic Parliament, the biggest building in Hungary, containing amongst other things the Hungarian Crown Jewels, is still the tallest building in Budapest. It's the seat of the National Assembly of Hungary, one of Europe's oldest legislative buildings. There are also Roman remains at the Aquincum Museum, and historic furniture at the Nagytétény Castle Museum, just 2 out of 223 museums in Budapest. The Castle Hill, the River Danube embankments and the whole of Andrassy út have been officially recognized as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Architecturally, Budapest is a real treasure, with enough baroque, neoclassical, eclectic and art nouveau buildings to satisfy even the most demanding traveller. Overall, though, Budapest has a fin-de-siècle feel to it, for it was then, during the capital's "golden age", that most of what you see today was built. It would be worth coming to Budapest just to sample the café culture. The Hungarian Café culture goes back to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Budapest is famous for its cuisine and café culture such as Gerbeaud Café, Százéves, Biarritz, Fortuna, Alabárdos, Kárpátia and the famous Mátyás Pince Restaurants. Out of the 500 Budapest coffee houses the New York Café was the most elegant and popular at the turn of the 20th century.

Overnight at the hotel in Budapest.

- **Day 3: Budapest**

Buffet Breakfast. Day at leisure to explore the city on your own.

## OPTIONAL

- Danube Cruise
- Budapest by Night with folkloric dinner.
- Half-day Royal Tour: Visit the summer residence of Queen Elisabeth - Sissi in Gödöllő, the second largest baroque chateau of the world, with interior visit
- Full day Danube Bend Tour: Visit Esztergom, the antique town of Visegrád, the former Royal Residence, with lunch and Szentendre, the magical Artists' Village
- Half-day Szentendre & Visegrád Tour: On the way to this picturesque town, Szentendre which is also known as the Artists' Village. At the end of your journey enjoy a boat cruise back to Budapest
- Herend & Balaton Tour: First you can see the world famous Herend Porcelain Manufactory products in the making, step by step. Then from Tihany Abbey, the spectacular scenery of the Hungarian "sea" -Lake Balaton- takes your breath away. After a lovely lunch in a traditional csárda you'll be able to have a walk on the lake side in Balatonfüred
- Full day Individual Vienna Tour: Vienna is only 240 kilometres from Budapest, at a 2-2,5 hours drive. Arrival and visit the capital of Austria.

Overnight at the hotel in Budapest.

- **Day 4: Budapest - Vienna**

After buffet breakfast at the hotel, check-out & make your own way to the station to board the train to Vienna. On arrival make your own way to the hotel & check-in. Rest of the day at leisure.

Overnight at the hotel in Vienna.

- **Day 5: Vienna**

Buffet Breakfast. Today you will have the opportunity to experience the city on your own pace with the Hop on-Hop off sightseeing tour. The city has a centralized layout radiating from the historic first district, or Inner-City with the Stephansdom and Stephansplatz at the centre. It is encircled by the Ring Road, a grand boulevard of 6.5 km constructed along the old city walls which were torn down at the end of the 19th century, and is bordered by palaces, museums, galleries, opera and other great historical sights. The Schönbrunn palace, is the undisputed queen of the sightseeing tours of Vienna. But what many forget is that the golden and glorious palace itself is but one of many attractions in the Schönbrunn complex. Apart from the extensive parks and gardens, there's a major zoo, the Gloriette, palm house, desert house, carriage museum and more. The Belvedere's two magnificent palaces, were built in

the 18th century as the summer residence for a general. The Albertina Museum, houses one of the largest print rooms in the world with more than 65,000 drawings and approx. 1 million old master prints.

Overnight at the hotel in Vienna.

- **Day 6: Vienna**

Buffet Breakfast. Day at leisure to explore the city on your own.

## **OPTIONAL**

- **Classical Vienna Tour:** Visit the inside of State Opera House and Hofburg, the Winter Imperial Palace, imperial apartments and St. Stephen's Cathedral
- **Half-day Vienna Woods:** Visit the most interesting sights in the southern part of the Vienna Woods. You will pass the Roman town of Baden, which is famous for its thermal springs and you will travel through the romantic Helenental to the former Mayerling hunting lodge
- **Concert at the Golden Hall in "Musikverein" with dinner at Grinzing:** Austrian dinner show at the beautiful City Hall and Vienna by night tour. A ride on the Giant Wheel at Prater and visit a wine tavern "Heuriger" in Grinzing.
- **Full day Salzburg:** The amazing Mozart's birthplace city.

Overnight at the hotel in Vienna.

- **Day 7: Fly Back**

After buffet breakfast at the hotel check-out of the hotel. Private transfer to Vienna airport for your return flight and end of our services. Return home with wonderful memories of your holiday with Balmer Lawrie, Travel & Vacations, (Vacations Exotica) which we're sure you will treasure for a lifetime.